

SECRET [REDACTED]

25X1

14 June 1966

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Rumors of Castro's Downfall

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2. It should be noted that Fidel is not known to have delivered a speech since 1 May -- despite the fact that there have been several occasions in the intervening weeks when one would normally have looked to Fidel to seize the limelight. Moreover, Castro's 27 May statements excoriating the United States and invoking an alert in Cuba were read by Radio Havana staff announcers.

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3. Castro's last recorded public appearance took place on 8 June, when Cuban radio broadcasts asserted that he was touring areas of Havana Province damaged by the recent hurricane. Interestingly, the Cuban press has not published photographic coverage of such a tour, and appear to have given it relatively little publicity at all. On 8 June, President Dorticos presided over a meeting of government officials convened to assess the hurricane damage. Fidel is reported to have arrived after the meeting adjourned.

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[REDACTED] The Cuban regime has shown unusual sensitivity to international and domestic irritants since the beginning of the year. Castro's overreaction to the recent shooting incident at Guantanamo is the latest and most dramatic example of this sensitivity. The reasons for Castro's erratic response to such stimuli are not readily apparent. High on the list, however, probably is his growing frustration after seven years of effort over the regime's repeated setbacks at home and abroad -- frustration aggravated by Fidel's increasing isolation within the Bloc in the restraints placed upon his maneuverability by the larger dictates of Communist policy. Finally, Fidel's charisma has begun to fade.

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6. Any move against Fidel would have to be countenanced by his brother, Defense Minister Raul Castro. Raul delivered a routine address at a military academy graduation on 11 June: his remarks contained no hint of any power struggle or an upset within the leadership.

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